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844 Should the baby appear to be in the wrong position for delivery those attending put the mother in a rug and swung her until the baby came into the "right" position. Normally coffee or wax was used on the navel "so it will stay there one week without falling." Furthermore, the mother was supposed to drink some of the water in which the baby was washed and to which a clove of garlic had been added "in order that the mother's milk may come sooner."

"After the baby has arrived the children are told that the stork has brought a little brother or sister to them through the chimney and they are very glad about it," was the way a proud young father phrased the matter in the course of our conversation about the arrival of his son.

846 The taboos of childbirth did not cease with the birth of the child. Since the woman was considered unclean for forty days she had to remain at home and was not allowed to attend the christening of her own child. At the end of this period she went to the church for a special purification ceremony at the hands of the priest. [783]

826 842 If the child had a birthmark, many peasants assumed that the mother had stolen some object which touched her own body where the birthmark appeared on the child. Any serious abnormality in an infant was explained by the *babi* on the grounds of too close kinship of the parents to each other or the occurrence of conception on Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday night, each of which is supposed to be kept free of intercourse because Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday are holy days. As one would expect, the latter taboo is of little importance nowadays; it is simply recalled as a convenient way of explaining something out of the ordinary.

854 ● 757 Some of the more ignorant peasants rubbed the head of a very sick infant with urine or, if the baby was born with a "closed nose," a cure was "effected" by putting a small fresh fish tailfirst up the nose. Afterwards the fish was put under a stone.

846 To keep the mother from fainting during her convalescence the family surrounded her with incense smoke and burning feathers both morning and evening, and gave her holy water to wash the baby's face and her face. Should some member of the family have returned after dark he could not enter the room where the mother was lying. She

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herself was not allowed out after sunset, but if she should have to go, "she takes a burning coal with tongs out with her, after leaving a broom near the baby to use in defending himself against the devil."

The baby's clothes were taken from the line before sunset. They were first held over the fire before they were put on the baby. During the whole first year the clothes were not turned inside out, nor were they pounded when washed by the customary *buhalka* (paddle). If this should be done, the baby might be afraid of thunder. Furthermore, the water in which the baby had been bathed could not be thrown out after sunset.

If a child became sick, "the first thing was to warm him, for he might have caught cold." Then he was given some home remedies prescribed by the *babi*. If the child did not then recover, the parents tried everything they knew, hoping that after some time "everything bad would pass away." In case the child grew worse, they called some of the neighbors or some old woman to come to see him. Only in very serious cases, when the peasants became convinced that nothing could help the child, would they carry him to the doctor. The reason for taking the child to the doctor was to save the extra fee charged for a home visit. Finally, "if God has given the child some more days to live, then the child will recover; if not, then his days are finished and God wants to take the child." (It is no wonder, then, that in Bulgaria 123 out of every 1,000 infants born in 1941 died during their first year of life. Although this represented a decline from the 1938 figure of 144, it still is more than two and one-half times the rate in the United States, which was 46 in 1941.)

The care given to a sick adult differed somewhat from that given to a sick child. When a person had been ill for a long time, his relatives went to the priest for holy water called *babina voda* (old woman's water) by the less respectful peasants. Sometimes the family let the sick person drink some of this water, but this practice was falling into disuse, "for the young people do not believe in it." I was told that very few believed in the curative power of the icons; but if a sick person should happen to, he was carried to the church to kiss the icon.